

Canadian Toad

Bufo hemiophrys
Family Bufonidae



FWS Status: Endangered (WY)

Global Rank: G4

State Rank: S1 (MT, WY)

Distribution: The principal range of the species is most of Alberta and Saskatchewan south and east to northern Montana, North Dakota, southern Manitoba, and northwestern Minnesota. In Wyoming, the subspecies *B.h. baxteri*, known as the Wyoming toad, is a relict population known only from the Laramie Basin in Albany County. They are found from around 1,000 to 7,000 ft. (300 to 2,130 m.) in elevation in prairies and aspen parkland, usually in or near water.

Description: The adult toads are relatively small, from 1.5 to 3 in. (3.7 to 7.5 cm.) in snout-vent length. Coloration is generally brownish, greenish, or light gray, with small dark blotches and a sometimes indistinct white median line. There is a parallel-sided, fused cranial crest or boss on the head, paratoid glands, and round pupils. The belly is spotted and adult males have dark throats. Cranial crests may not be fused into a boss in younger toads. Tadpoles are black or nearly so above



Current range of the Canadian toad

and slightly lighter below and have a clear area on the throat and chest. Tail musculature is dark except for narrow light ventral area. The voice is a clear, soft trill or buzz of about 80 individual trills uttered about twice each minute, and adults have a round vocal sac.

Reproduction: Small breeding populations appear at ponds in May after daytime maximum temperatures reach near 70°F. Eggs are laid in gelatinous strings from mid-May to July. Larvae usually transform by early August.

Food: The diet of adults includes ants, beetles, and a variety of arthropods.

Habits: The toad is a burrowing animal which probably requires some deep soil in which to burrow. In parts of its range, the Canadian toad uses Mina-type mounds to hibernate. It frequents lakes, ponds, streams, marshes, potholes, and roadside ditches, where it usually breeds in the shallows. It may swim well out from shore when frightened. The toads are mainly diurnal during the breeding season, retiring to sandy or loamy areas to bury themselves at night. Adults are active from late March to September during the days and nocturnal during warm nights.

Management Implications: The population of the endangered Wyoming toad is rare and probably near extinction. Possible causes for recent declines are widespread spraying of insecticides to control mosquitoes, changes in agricultural practices, increased predation, disease, and climatic changes.

Important References: Stebbins, R.C. 1985. A field guide to western reptiles and amphibians. The Peterson Field Guide Series, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, NY; Baxter, G.T., and M.D. Stone. 1980. Amphibians and

reptiles of Wyoming. Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Cheyenne, WY.